Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A filter element, comprising:
a ring of filtration media circumscribing a central axis and defining an internal cavity, an end cap sealingly bonded to each end of the media ring, with one of the end caps having an annular body defining a central aperture, and a groove formed circumferentially around an inner wall surface of the aperture, said groove having a substantially rectangular configuration in cross-section, with parallel sidewalls and an end wall perpendicular to the sidewalls, and is thinner between the sidewalls than it is deep between the inner wall surface and the end wall, and opening radially inward toward the central axis of the element, wherein a central, perforated support core can be received internally of the element and retained therein by a retaining device received in the groove.

2. (Original) The filter element as in claim 1, wherein an annular flange inwardly bounds the opening of the body, and projects from an end connected to the body a short distance axially within the cavity toward the other end cap to a distal end located closer to the one end cap than the other, the groove formed in the flange toward the connected end of the flange.

3. (Original) The filter element as in claim 2, wherein the annular flange and annular body are formed unitary, in one piece.

4. (Original) The filter element as in claim 1, wherein all components of the filter element are formed from incineratable material.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) The filter element as in claim [[5]] 1, wherein the width of the groove is less than the thickness of the one end cap.

7. (Currently Amended) A filter subassembly, including a ring of filtration media circumscribing a central axis and defining an internal cavity, an end cap sealingly bonded to each end of the media ring, with one of the end caps having an annular body defining a central aperture; and a rigid retaining ring [removeably] removably attached to the one end cap and projecting radially inward into the internal cavity.

8. (Original) The filter subassembly as in claim 7, wherein a groove is formed circumferentially around an inner wall surface of the aperture in the one end cap, and opens radially inward toward the central axis of the element, and the retaining ring is received in the groove.

9. (Original) The filter subassembly as in claim 8, wherein the one end cap includes an annular flange inwardly bounding the annulus of the one end cap, and projecting from an end connected to the body a short distance axially within the cavity toward the other end cap to a distal end located closer to the one end cap than the other, the groove formed in the flange toward the connected end of the flange.

10. (Original) The filter subassembly as in claim 9, wherein the annular flange and annular body are formed unitary, in one piece.

11. (Currently Amended) [The filter subassembly as in claim 7,] A filter subassembly, including a ring of filtration media circumscribing a central axis and

defining an internal cavity, an end cap sealingly bonded to each end of the media ring, with one of the end caps having an annular body defining a central aperture; and a retaining ring removably attached to the one end cap and projecting radially inward into the internal cavity, wherein the retaining ring is a C-ring.

12. (Original) The filter subassembly as in claim 7, wherein all components of the filter element are formed from incineratable material.

13. (Original) The filter subassembly as in claim 7, and further including a central support core located within the central cavity and retained therein by the retaining ring.

14. (Original) The filter subassembly as in claim 13, wherein the support core is closely and completely received within the internal cavity of the filter media ring, and is supported at either end by the end caps of the element.

15. (Original) The filter subassembly as in claim 14, wherein the retaining ring is located so as to engage and support an axial end of the support core.

16. (Original) The filter subassembly as in claim 15, wherein the support core is retained at other axial end by the other end cap.

17. (Original) The filter subassembly as in claim 13, wherein all components of the filter element are an incineratable material, and the support core is metal.

18. (Currently Amended) A filter assembly including a housing; a filter element located in the housing and having a ring of filtration media circumscribing a

central axis and defining an internal cavity; a support core [removeably] removably disposed within the internal cavity of the filtration media; and a rigid retaining device [removeably] removably attached to the element and retaining the support core within the internal cavity, the retaining device being removable from the element to allow removal of the support core from the element.

19. (Original) The filter assembly as in claim 18, wherein an end cap is sealingly bonded to each end of the media ring, with one of the end caps having an annular body defining a central aperture sized so as to allow the support core to be inserted into and removed from the internal cavity of the element, and the retaining device is removably attached to the one end cap and projects radially inward into the internal cavity.

20. (Original) The filter assembly as in claim 19, wherein a groove is formed circumferentially around an inner wall surface of the aperture in the one end cap, and opens radially inward toward the central axis of the element, and the retaining device is received in the groove.

21. (Original) The filter assembly as in claim 20, wherein the one end cap includes an annular flange inwardly bounding the annulus of the one end cap, and projecting from an end connected to the body a short distance axially within the cavity toward the other end cap to a distal end located closer to the one end cap than the other, the groove formed in the flange toward the connected end of the flange.

22. (Original) The filter assembly as in claim 21, wherein the annular flange and annular body are formed unitary, in one piece.

23. (Currently Amended) [The filter assembly as in claim 19,] A filter assembly including a housing; a filter element located in the housing and having a ring of filtration media circumscribing a central axis and defining an internal cavity; a support core removably disposed within the internal cavity of the filtration media; and a retaining device removably attached to the element and retaining the support core within the internal cavity, the retaining device being removable from the element to allow removal of the support core from the element, wherein the retaining device is a C-ring.

24. (Original) The filter assembly as in claim 19, wherein all components of the filter element are an incineratable material, and the support core is metal.

25. (Original) The filter assembly as in claim 19, wherein the support core is closely and completely received within the internal cavity of the filter media ring, and is supported at either end by the end caps of the element.

26. (Original) The filter assembly as in claim 25, wherein the retaining device is located so as to engage and support an axial end of the support core.

27. (Original) The filter assembly as in claim 26, wherein the support core is retained at another axial end by the other end cap.

28. (Original) The filter assembly as in claim 18, wherein the retaining device comprises means for retaining the support core in the filter element, and allowing removal thereof.

29. (Original) The filter assembly as in claim 18, wherein the housing includes an annular base, with a flow passage therein, supporting an end of the filter element.

30. (New) The filter subassembly as in claim 8, wherein the groove has a substantially rectangular configuration in cross-section, with parallel sidewalls and a perpendicular end wall, and is thinner between the sidewalls than it is deep between the wall surface and the end wall.

31. (New) The filter subassembly as in claim 7, wherein the retaining ring has a thin, flat, annular configuration and is deformable in the radial direction.

32. (New) The filter assembly as in claim 20, wherein the groove has a substantially rectangular configuration in cross-section, with parallel sidewalls and a perpendicular end wall, and is thinner between the sidewalls than it is deep between the wall surface and the end wall.

33. (New) The filter assembly as in claim 18, wherein the retaining device has a thin, flat, annular configuration and is deformable in the radial direction.